

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

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AT RICHMOND, DECEMBER 4, 1998

APPLICATION OF

COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC.

CASE NO. PUE970455

For general increase in
natural gas rates and
approval of performance-based
rate regulation methodology
pursuant to Va. Code § 56-235.6

ORDER ON MOTION FOR RELIEF

On October 29, 1998, the Staff of the State Corporation Commission filed a motion requesting relief from the Commission's Order of September 30, 1997, in the above-styled matter directing the Office of General Counsel and the Division of Energy Regulation (collectively, "the Staff") to file with the Commission, by November 1, 1998, a report on a proposed generic code of conduct for retail gas unbundling programs. The Staff requests that its obligations to develop and report on a proposed generic code of conduct be deferred until such time as its efforts in this area can be coordinated with retail access pilot programs of electric utilities, proposals for which were to be filed with the Commission in another Commission proceeding.

In support of its motion, the Staff states that in
Commonwealth ex rel. State Corp. Comm'n, Ex parte: In the matter

of requiring reports and actions related to independent system operators, regional power exchanges, and retail access pilot programs, Case No. PUE980138, the Commission has directed Virginia Electric and Power Company ("Virginia Power") and Appalachian Power Company ("AEP-Virginia") to begin work towards the implementation of retail access pilot programs, and to a report on such pilot programs.¹

The Staff further states that it anticipates there will be a need for a generic code of conduct to govern retail access pilot programs for electric utilities, and that there would be advantages in developing these codes of conduct concurrently with those for retail gas unbundling programs.

No responses to the Staff motion were received.

By an order entered December 3, 1998, we created a separate docket in which interim rules will be established to govern issues common to both electric and natural gas retail access pilot programs. See Commonwealth ex rel. State Corp. Comm'n, Ex parte: In the matter of establishing interim rules for retail access pilot programs, Case No. PUE980812. Specifically, these issues include certification, codes of conduct, and standards of conduct governing relationships among entities participating in

¹ Virginia Power and AEP-Virginia filed their reports on retail access pilot programs on November 2, 1998. The Commission invited, but did not order, other companies providing retail electric service to propose retail access pilot programs.

such programs. In that proceeding, the Staff will lead a task force which will develop proposed such rules.

NOW THE COMMISSION, upon consideration of the foregoing, finds that the Staff's request should be granted to the extent it may defer its filing of a proposed generic code of conduct for retail gas unbundling programs in this docket so that it may develop a common code of conduct governing electric and gas retail access pilot programs in Case No. PUE980812.

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

(1) The Staff's Motion for Relief is granted.

(2) All further matters related to the establishment of a task force for the development of a proposed interim generic code of conduct to govern retail access programs for gas utilities shall be conducted in accordance with procedures established in Case No. PUE980812.